

## CLAIMS

1. A branching pipe joint (181) for distributing a refrigerant flowing within a main pipe (51, 53) to two flows, comprising:

5 a substantially Y-pipe shaped branch part (182) comprising an inlet pipe part (182a) wherethrough flows the refrigerant that flows in from said main pipe, and a first outlet pipe part (182b) and a second outlet pipe part (182c) wherethrough flows the refrigerant along a first direction (A), which is the flow direction of the refrigerant that flows through said inlet pipe part, and along said first direction in directions substantially symmetric to a centerline (O-O) of said inlet pipe part;

10 a first branch nozzle part (183) connected to said first outlet pipe part and extending along said first direction;

a second branch nozzle part (184) connected to said second outlet pipe part and extending along said first direction; and

15 a first branch pipe (186) that is a pipe member, wherein one end part is connected to a tip part of said first branch nozzle during plumbing work, and that is bent so that the other end part faces a direction that intersects said first direction in a state connected to said first branch nozzle part,

wherein,

20 said first branch nozzle part and said second branch nozzle part are disposed so that the spacing (S) between the portion of the tip part of said first branch nozzle part nearest said second branch nozzle part side and the portion of said second branch nozzle part nearest the tip part of said first branch nozzle part is less than or equal to 40 mm.

2. A branching pipe joint (181) as recited in Claim 1, wherein

25 said first branch pipe (186) is capable of connecting to said first branch nozzle part (183) by brazing; and

said spacing (S) is greater than or equal to 7 mm.

3. A branching pipe joint (181) as recited in Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein

30 the other end part of said first branch pipe (186) comprises a first reducer pipe connecting part (186a), wherein the pipe diameter changes in steps.

4. A branching pipe joint (181) as recited in any one claim of Claim 1 through Claim 3, wherein

the tip part of said second branch nozzle part (184) comprises a second reducer pipe connecting part (184a) that protrudes further than the tip part of said first branch

nozzle part (183) toward said first direction (A) side and wherein the pipe diameter changes in steps.

5. A branching pipe joint (181) as recited in any one claim of Claim 1 through Claim 3, further comprising:

5 a second branch pipe (187) that is a pipe member wherein one end part is connected during plumbing work to said second branch nozzle part (184), comprising a second reducer pipe connecting part (187a) at the other end part wherein the pipe diameter changes in steps, and extending along said first direction (A) in a state connected to said second branch nozzle part.

10 6. An air conditioner (1), comprising:

at least one indoor unit (3);

a plurality of outdoor units (2);

a union connecting piping (51) that serves as a main pipe extending from said indoor unit to said plurality of outdoor units;

15 at least one branching pipe joint (181), as recited in any one claim of Claim 1 through Claim 5, that is connected to said union connecting piping in accordance with a number of said outdoor units and that distributes the flow of a refrigerant to two flows; and

20 a plurality of unit branch pipings (54) that each connects said branching pipe joint to a connection port (21, 22) of one of said outdoor units.